

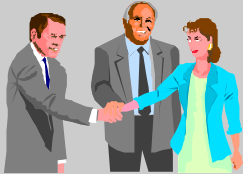


This fact sheet provides information about:

- T wastes found*
- T plans for cleanup*
- T site cleanup team*
- T where you can get more information*

You Are Invited!

To learn more about the cleanup or offer your views, you are invited to meet one-on-one with representatives of the site cleanup team in an information session:



**Tuesday, August 1
4 - 7 pm
La Crosse County
Library
Onalaska Branch
741 Oak Avenue S**

Note that there will be no formal presentation - just drop by between 4 and 7.

United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Office of Public Affairs
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Illinois Indiana
Michigan Minnesota
Wisconsin Ohio

Cleanup to Begin at National Auto Wrecking Site

Onalaska, Wisconsin

July 2000

Cleanup of the National Auto Wrecking site is about to begin. This fact sheet summarizes site cleanup plans and provides additional sources of information. Words in **bold** are defined in the glossary on page 2.



This shed was used to burn cars after usable parts were removed. Soils surrounding the shed are contaminated with lead and petroleum products.

Site Background

The 2.5 acre National Auto Wrecking site is an abandoned automobile salvage yard, located on 2nd Avenue in Onalaska, just north of the Nutbush City Limits Restaurant and across the street from Northwest Hardwoods. The site history of the previously undeveloped property began in 1952 when Mr. Charles Ablan, owner of the northern parcel, and Mr. Louis Karrib, owner of the adjacent southern parcel, began salvage operations. When Mr. Karrib died in 1964, Mr. Ablan leased the southern parcel and continued operations until the spring of 1994. That year, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) initiated a process to require Mr. Ablan to investigate the site for hazardous waste and clean it up. Upon the death of Mr. Ablan in 1998, DNR referred the National Auto Wrecking site to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for further action under the **Superfund** program.

Site Characteristics and Wastes

The site is a sparsely vegetated lot scattered with ash, burnt wire, and transformer parts. Automotive parts such as cracked battery pieces, lead chips, and hoses are also found on the parcel. The land is clear of all vehicles, large parts and salvage equipment. On the northern parcel of the site is a small locked shed. It also is littered with miscellaneous debris covered over with soil by the owner during salvage operations. A severely dilapidated office with an attached garage and a metal burn shed sit on the southern parcel. Two above ground storage tanks are located near the office and an underground storage tank is suspected to be present near the garage.

Based on previous investigations, EPA and DNR have identified four primary areas of visible soil contamination:

- T a small ash pile near the office building;
- T ash and stained soils in and next to the burn shed;
- T piles of cracked battery casings near the site's eastern border and along the railroad right-of-way;
- T stained soils in a former motor storage area located near the garage.

EPA and DNR have identified a number of contaminants in site soils: lead and other metals, **polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)**, and **volatile organic compounds**. The agencies have also found petroleum products and lead in the ground water.

People who trespass on the site may be exposed to hazardous chemicals or injured by physical hazards, particularly those inside the abandoned buildings. Lead and PCBs in soils are at levels that are a health concern to people who come in contact with site soils. Because of this, the Wisconsin Division of Public Health and EPA recommend that nearby residents not enter the property. In addition, although ground water is contaminated, no one is known to be using ground water as a source of drinking water.



Site Information Repository

EPA has made site files available for review. The

repository includes

the **Administrative Order by Consent** and will include the work plan discussed below as well as additional material as it becomes available.

The repository is located in the La Crosse County Library - Onalaska Branch, located



Glossary

Administrative Order by Consent: A legal agreement under the authority of the Superfund law between EPA and potentially responsible parties that caused the contamination, whereby the parties agree to perform or pay the cost of an action or group of actions to be taken at a site.

Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs): A family of compounds commonly used in electrical transformers as insulators and coolants; lubricants such as motor oil; adhesives; and caulking compounds. PCBs are extremely persistent in the environment because they do not readily break down into less harmful chemicals.

Superfund: The common name for the Federal program created by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). This act provides for the cleanup of hazardous waste from old, abandoned waste sites.

Volatile organic compounds: Contaminants comprised of solvents, degreasers, paints, thinners and fuels that evaporate into the air easily.

Site Cleanup Team



A team of federal and state representatives is working on the cleanup of the National Auto Wrecking site.

Rey Rivera, EPA On-Scene Coordinator, is the lead technical person and is responsible for coordinating all site investigation and cleanup work as well as overseeing the work of the environmental contracting firms.

Bri Bill, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator, is responsible for keeping the community informed of site activities, maintaining the site repository in the library, and soliciting input from the public.

Jack Eslien, DNR Site Manager, works with the On-Scene Coordinator to ensure that site technical activities comply with state regulations for protecting human health and the environment.

Henry Nehls-Lowe, Wisconsin Division of Health Epidemiologist, looks at the possible effects the site might have on human health and advises EPA and DNR on these effects.



Cleanup Activities

On May 24, 2000, EPA and the estate of Charles Ablan entered into a legal agreement, called an **Administrative Order by Consent**,

which provides for the cleanup of both parcels of the National Auto Wrecking site. In the order, the Ablan estate agrees to conduct a cleanup under the oversight of EPA and DNR. The Ablan estate has retained Braun Intertec Corporation, an environmental consulting firm with offices in La Crosse, to serve as the prime contractor for the work.

EPA expects the cleanup work to occur in two phases. In the first phase under the oversight of EPA and DNR, Braun Intertec Corporation will conduct the following activities:

- T** prepare a work plan that describes in detail how visibly contaminated areas will be cleaned up, how airborne contaminants and dust will be monitored and kept in check, and what provisions will be in place to protect the health and safety of workers and nearby residents;
- T** install a fence and post warning signs around the site;
- T** stabilize or demolish structures that present physical hazards;
- T** test, decontaminate, remove from the site, and

dispose of drums, containers, debris, asbestos, and storage tanks, as needed;

- T** dig out, remove and dispose of waste in areas known to be contaminated as described above.

In the second phase, Braun Intertec Corporation will begin by preparing a work plan that describes how the site and any adjacent off-site areas will be tested for any contamination not readily visible and how these contaminated areas will be addressed. This phase is expected to address ground water and remaining soil contamination, as well as buried debris now covered by soil on the northern parcel.

Schedule

EPA has reviewed a draft work plan for the first phase of the project. Activities described in the draft work plan, including installation of a fence, demolition of site structures, and treatment and/or removal of visible wastes will begin soon after EPA approves the work plan. EPA expects that work will begin within the month of August. The second phase of work is expected to start once the work plan for the second phase is approved by EPA. EPA expects that the contractor will submit this work plan within six months of the start of the first phase of work.

For Additional Information

If you would like additional information about the National Auto Wrecking site, please contact the individuals listed below or visit the site information repository at the Onalaska branch library.

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